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EDITORIALS.

WITH profound sorrow we announce the death of our colleague, Dr. George Huntington Williams, Professor of Inorganic Geology in the Johns Hopkins University of Baltimore. Tidings of his death came to most of us like a sudden flash of lightning from a cloudless sky. In the midst of ceaseless activity, and at the height of ever-increasing effectiveness, he has been cut off. To those who for three weeks watched the rising fever, and endeavored by every means known to medical science to avert a fatal crisis, his death was almost as unexpected. Subsequent examination showed the presence of an organic disorder which had rendered his system incapable of withstanding the attack of typhoid. Truly "in the midst of life we are in death." To those of us who have been intimately associated with Professor Williams, his death comes as a personal bereavement, for his amiable disposition, his generous sympathy, and his unselfish interest in his friends bound them to him with ties of lasting affection. To those who were fortunate enough to study under his guidance, his death must come with peculiar force, for he possessed in a high degree those qualities which render a teacher powerful. His learning was broad and deep, and his reading extensive. He was gifted with a memory that was not only strongly retentive, but had the rare trait of storing up the kernel of a matter, and letting go the chaff. His speech was clear, graceful and vigorous. The enthusiasm with which he attacked every subject in the varied range of his work communicated itself through his words to his hearers. His successful labors in the field of original research not only added to the sum of knowledge in general, but served as an example and powerful incentive to those who were following his teachings. His pupils will indeed be fortunate if they have caught anything of the spirit of his inspiration, or have learned to follow in his footsteps. The science of geology has lost a strong and able advocate and promoter, and geologists of all countries have lost an illustrious associate. *The Journal of Geology* in particular sustains a heavy loss, for Professor Williams has taken an active part in its establishment, contributing materially to its support in various directions. It will be our privilege to publish at some future time a fitting sketch of his life work.

J. P. I.

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THE Peary Relief Party left Brooklyn, N. Y., on the 20th of June, taking passage on a regular steamer plying between New York and St. Johns, Newfoundland. The party stopped at St. Johns until the 7th of July, when they sailed for Peary's headquarters. The vessel which carried the party from St. Johns, the Falcon, is a German-built steam sealer, made with especial reference to voyages in polar seas. She is under the charge of Captain Bartlett, who took the Peary party to its destination last year, and who, during that trip, made the quickest passage of Melville Bay on record. The party consists of seven members: Henry G. Bryant, leader; Professor T. C. Chamberlin, University of Chicago, Geologist; Professor W. Libbey, Jr., of Princeton, Geographer; Mr. H. C. Bridgeman, of Brooklyn, Historian; Dr. Olef Ohlin, of Sweden, Zoölogist; Mr. Amiel Debitsch (Mrs. Peary's brother), Civil Engineer, and Dr. H. E. Wetherell, Surgeon.

It was the plan of the party to make several stops before reaching Peary's headquarters. The first of these was to be at Disco Island, the second in Waigat straits, the third at Cape York, and the fourth at the Carey Islands. It is possible that it will be found necessary to omit some of these. The stop in Waigat straits, if made, will be for the purpose of studying the Tertiary formations there exposed. From Cape York, if time and circumstances favor, a short excursion will be made inland. The stop at the Carey Islands is planned for the purpose of securing, if possible, information concerning the two Swedish naturalists who were wrecked there two years since. From the Carey Islands the party will proceed direct to Peary's headquarters on Bowdoin Bay, a dependency of Inglefield Gulf, latitude about 77°30′.

If the conditions are favorable, six of the party will occupy the interval between the arrival at Peary's headquarters and the date of the return, about September 1st, in the exploration of Ellesmere Land and Jones Sound. Instead of accompanying this party, Professor Chamberlin will remain in the vicinity of Inglefield Gulf. While incidental attention will be given to other geological questions, the work of the ice will constitute his principal study. This locality has been chosen for the special study of glaciation, since it is the testimony of those who have seen it, that glacier ice in all stages of activity is here accessible, and that it occurs in a great variety of topographical situations and relations. Attention will be especially directed to the basal contact plane of the ice. A serious effort will be made to find out as exactly as possible what is taking place at this horizon. The margin of the ice, and the territory recently abandoned by it, will furnish the chief field for this study. By indirect means it is hoped that the studies along the margin of the ice will throw light upon the questions of ice activity back from the margin. All possible phases of glacial deposition, as well as all drainage phenomena of the ice will be studied in as much detail as time and conditions permit. It is hoped that data may be secured bearing upon the question of the rise of material from the basal to the superficial portions of the ice, and so upon the general question of superglacial drift, about which there is so much difference of opinion. It is hoped also that the phenomena to which stagnant ice gives rise may be found in process of development. Fiord glaciers, which have received attention from many glacialists heretofore, will have but a secondary place in Professor Chamberlin's studies. The same may be said of the upper surface of the mer de glace. It is planned, however, to make one or more excursions back from the edge of the ice. It is most fortunate for the science of geology that one so well equipped for this work as Professor Chamberlin was able to undertake it.

Lieutenant Peary's plan was to carry his outfit and provisions to the summit of the ice during the winter, and cache it at advanced points, so as to save time and labor when the spring opened. He expected to start early in the spring, and to follow very nearly his previous route northeasterly across the ice to the East Greenland sea, latitude about 81°30′, longitude about 34° west. Here his party was to divide. One division was to trace the east coast southward to the point previously reached by explorers from the south, and then strike westward across the inland ice to headquarters. This route will carry the explorers across the broadest part of the great mer de glace, and, if successful, should give important data concerning the maximum height of ice and snow accumulation, and concerning the conditions of accumulation under these extreme conditions. Lieutenant Peary himself, with one or two aids, expected to trace out the insular land lying beyond the point previously reached by him. His route was to be controlled more or less by what he found, as well as by local conditions favoring or preventing progress. Should both these parties be as successful as hoped, they will bring back an essentially completed outline of Greenland, and its northern insular dependencies. The Peary parties expect to reach headquarters on Inglefield Gulf by the 1st of September. The ship's party will have returned by that time, and Professor Chamberlin's work at Inglefield Gulf will cease when the party is ready to start homeward.

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THE polar expedition of which Captain Cook has charge, was obliged, on the point of starting, to change vessels. Among those accustomed to northern seas, there was unfavorable comment concerning the vessel—the Miranda—in which this party sailed. They seem to have reached St. Johns, Newfoundland, in safety. From this point they started northward. It is reported that when 57 miles west of Belle Isle, the Miranda collided with an iceberg, and was compelled to return to St. Johns for repairs.

The accident occurred on the 17th. According to the reports which are at hand, no one of the party was injured, and the vessel was not so seriously damaged but that she could be repaired without great delay. The exact course of this expedition is not known to the writer.

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AT about the same time that the Peary expedition left St. Johns, an English polar expedition started, under the direction of Mr. F. G. Jackson. Mr. Jackson expected to leave London on the 11th of July, in a vessel of four-hundred-tons yacht measurement. The party was to call at Archangel, where a Russian hut, built in sections, and thirty dogs of West Siberian breed, were to be taken on board. Thence Mr. Jackson intends to proceed to Franz Josef Land. Here the party will disembark, establish their principal depot, and send their vessel, the Windward, home. This is expected to be accomplished by the end of August or the beginning of September. The winter will be spent at the depot, and about the end of March next Mr. Jackson hopes to be able to push northward up Austria Sound to Cape Flagely, latitude 82° 30′, the most northern point yet reached by Europeans. At intervals of thirty or forty miles depots for the storage of provisions will be formed, so that there will be no lack of food on the return. Mr. Jackson will endeavor to reach Petermann's Land, and to go as much further as may be possible. Sufficient food was to be taken to last four years, on the estimate of six pounds three ounces to each man per diem.

The main considerations which induced Mr. Jackson to select Franz Josef Land as the first objective point of his expedition were: 1. The accessibility of Franz Josef Land late in the summer, when approached along the meridian of 45° east, or some meridian between that of 45° and 50° east. 2. The northward extension of Franz Josef Land to a latitude as high as 82° 30′ at Cape Flagely, the long stretch of land forming a safe route for advance and retreat, and providing all that is needed in the way of sites for depots and cairns. 3. Standing on Cape Flagely, Payer saw, 60 or 70 miles to the northward, the highest outlines of an ice-covered land of apparently large extent. This he called Petermann's Land, and that land lay undoubtedly in a latitude as far north as any yet reached. It is this land which Mr. Jackson and his party will try to reach next spring, after having marched over the ice of Austria Sound. 4. The great abundance of animal life on the southern shores of Franz Josef Land during the winter, and all over the known country in the summer, make this a desirable starting point.

A specially constructed aluminium boat, each section of which will float by itself, a copper boat, and three Norwegian boats were taken by Mr. Jackson; eighteen sledges, each of which is capable of carrying one thousand pounds, are among the articles of equipment. These will be drawn by the Siberian dogs. The party will take with it a complete set of meteorological and other instruments for scientific work, and Mr. Jackson hopes to be able to add much to geographical knowledge, as well as to our imperfect information concerning the natural history of the Arctic regions. The expense of the expedition headed by Mr. Jackson is borne by Mr. Alfred C. Harmsworth, and is known as the Jackson-Harmsworth Polar Expedition.

R. D. S.